

THE SIPP UTILITIES USER'S MANUAL

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Version 3.0
November 2005

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**Development of SIPP Utilities is funded by grant no. 2 R44 HD39618-02 from the
National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.**

Caveats

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1. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) is conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, which is the source of the data included in *SIPP Utilities*. Much of the documentation is derived directly from Census Bureau publications.

Development of this product is funded by grant no. 2 R44 HD39618-02 from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, Bldg 31, Room 2A32, MSC 2425, 31 Center Drive, Bethesda, MD 20892-2425

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

SIPP Utilities facilitates access to SIPP data by providing search, documentation, and extraction tools.

SIPP interviews are conducted in 4-monthly waves on panels of subject persons. New panels were started each year from 1984 to 1993, and then in 1996 and 2001. Each interview includes a set of core questions, the results being recorded in 'core data files'. Most interviews also contain questions on particular topics, which vary from wave to wave. These results are recorded in 'topical data files'. (In the 1984-1989 panels, the topical data were appended to the core data files). For the 1984-1993 panels, the Census Bureau also released a 'longitudinal data file', summarizing core data for all the waves. For the 1996 and 2001 panels, longitudinally consistent core files, and separate 'longitudinal weights files' were released. More information about the structure of the interviews and data files is provided in the *SIPP Utilities* general documentation (see section 6.3.7.2 below).

This version of *SIPP Utilities* includes all core and longitudinal data (and weights) for all panels. It also includes a selection of the topical modules for all panels. Later versions will add the remainder of the topical module data.

In *SIPP Utilities*, the core, topical, longitudinal, and weights files are collectively referred to as 'file types'. File types, panels, and waves are collectively referred to as 'sources'. Each 'source' usually corresponds to one Census Bureau data file.

SIPP Utilities consists of tools to help the user find variables of interest in the SIPP files, view in a concise format all important information for a variable across all sources, and extract subsets of the data by simply naming variables and sources, and specifying filter criteria if needed.

It includes a facility for creating and editing extraction requests, and it displays the contents of the output files directly on the screen. Hyperlinks in the documentation files allow convenient review of related variables and appendices.

SIPP Utilities runs under Microsoft® Windows®, providing the user with an intuitive visual interface.

3. MINIMUM SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

- Pentium grade PC running Windows 98, 2000, Me, NT, or XP
- 500 MB free disk space (or up to 8GB if the option to load data files to disk is exercised)
- 64 MB RAM
- 1024 x 768 resolution display (or proportionately more if the display font size has been increased from 'Normal size').
- CD or DVD reader

Some of the SIPP data files are large. Depending on typical usage, the increased performance of a system with abundant memory, disk space, and operating speed may be preferred.

To utilize all the features of *SIPP Utilities*, three third-party “helper” applications must be present on the computer. Probably, they are already installed, but in case they aren't, they may be downloaded free of charge from their publishers' web sites, using the links below.

The first is the Adobe® Acrobat® Reader®. Version 4.05 or later is required to view this manual and the other .pdf files. If necessary, download the latest version from Adobe (<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep.html>).

The second is a component of Microsoft® Internet Explorer 4.0 or later, required to view the *SIPP Utilities* Documentation and Results screens. Internet Explorer does not need to be the default browser, or even present in full on the computer. The necessary component is included with Windows 98 or later, and Windows NT 4.0 or later.

The third is a viewer for Microsoft® Excel, required to read the cross-reference tables. If Excel is not installed, the viewer may be downloaded free of charge from Microsoft (<http://www.microsoft.com/office/000/viewers.asp>).

(If any of those links fail, the publisher has rearranged their site since we prepared this manual. Try the Adobe (<http://www.adobe.com/>) or Microsoft (<http://www.microsoft.com/>) home pages).

Follow the publishers' instructions to install the downloaded applications.

4. COMPONENTS OF SIPP UTILITIES

SIPP Utilities consists of three components: data, documentation, and software. They are fully discussed later in this manual. The documentation and software are copied to the hard disk during installation.

4.1. Data files

This version includes numerous data files, one for each source. Each is a compressed copy of the corresponding file (or sometimes multiple files) distributed by the Census Bureau. On installation, they may be copied to a hard disk, or may remain on the CDs.

4.2. Documentation files

The documentation component consists of documentation files for each of the variables, and a comprehensive set of general documents. The general documents are copied to the \documentation subdirectory under the installation directory.

There are over 6,000 variable documentation files, one for each variable (except allocation flags and certain unedited versions of variables, which are documented within the documentation file of the variable to which they refer). Information for that variable for all sources is included in the variable's one file, which may be displayed as described in section 6.3.2.1 below. Each separately-documented variable has a user-friendly *SIPP Utilities* variable name, with a maximum length of 8 characters (or 10 in the case of the ‘common core-topical’ variables discussed in Appendix M). The variable documents each contain a description of the variable, its coding information, its source or sources, references to related variables, the name(s) used by the Census Bureau for that variable, and any other information we think might be helpful.

The general documents include cross-reference tables enabling identification of the variable from the names and file positions shown in the Census Bureau documentation, topics lists, a group of appendices, this manual, and a documentation guide.

4.3. Software files

The software files are on a CD or DVD labeled ‘Installation Software’. On installation, the software and associated tables, lists, and indexes are copied to the hard disk. Full installation details are shown in the following section of this manual.

As a bonus, the *SIPP Utilities* CD/DVDs also include copies of many Census Bureau documents which are not integrated into *SIPP Utilities*. They may be found on the discs labeled ‘Census Support Documents’.

5. INSTALLATION

5.1. Installation procedure

5.1.1. Insert the CD/DVD labeled 'Installation Software' into the reader.

5.1.2. If the machine allows CDs/DVDs to autorun, a message will soon appear requesting confirmation that *SIPP Utilities* is to be installed. Click 'Yes'. If the message does not appear, click Start, select Run..., enter d:\setup in the box, and click OK. (Substitute the CD/DVD drive letter for 'd' if necessary).

5.1.3. Follow the screen instructions until software installation is complete. Be patient if nothing happens immediately at some of the steps. Installation will proceed in a few seconds.

5.1.4. When a message shows indicating that installation was successfully completed, keep the 'Launch the program' box checked, and click 'Finish'.

5.1.5. *SIPP Utilities* will open, initially copying more files from the disc to the installation directory. During this process, it shows an 'Install dictionary files' screen, providing status of the copying process. (If it is hidden behind other windows, it may be displayed by clicking its button on the Windows taskbar).

5.1.6. If this is a first installation of *SIPP Utilities* on this machine, a 'Select CD/DVD and Data Drives' screen will then show. Verify that the drive letter displayed is the one for the CD/DVD drive in use (if there are multiple drives, it may need to be changed, using the adjacent 'Browse' button). The 'CD/DVD drive' box will now show the drive letter, and the 'Data file directory' box will show the drive's '\data' directory.

5.1.7. Either now or later, this screen may be used to copy data files to your hard disk. See 'Optional copying of data files to hard disk', below.

5.1.8. Click OK to close the 'Select CD/DVD and Data Drives' screen.

5.1.9. If this is a first installation of *SIPP Utilities* on this machine, follow the screen instructions to specify a working directory and open an extraction request file.

5.1.10. *SIPP Utilities* is now ready to be used.

5.2. Closing and re-opening *SIPP Utilities*

Close *SIPP Utilities* by clicking the 'Exit' button at top right of the *SIPP Utilities* screen.

Re-open by clicking the Windows 'Start' button and selecting 'SIPP Utilities' from the 'Programs' list.

To place a shortcut to *SIPP Utilities* on the desktop, hold down the right mouse key over 'SIPP Utilities' in the 'Programs' list, and drag it to the desktop. A menu will show. Select 'Create Shortcut(s) Here' or 'Copy Here'.

5.3. Optional copying of data files to hard disk

Some or all of the data files may optionally be copied to a hard disk. There are several benefits of copying the data to disk. If they are not copied, the correct data CD/DVD will need to be inserted for the required extraction. Some extractions require more than one disc, so there will be prompts to change discs. Reading data from hard disk is usually considerably faster than reading from a CD/DVD.

The only reason not to copy the data files is the disk space required. The *SIPP Utilities* data files occupy 15 CDs, or 2 DVDs, and will take nearly 8GB of disk space if you copy them all.

Data files may be copied to your disk (or deleted) at any time. It is not a necessary part of the installation process.

If they are copied, different locations may be used for different files, and some may be left on the discs. If they are not all in the same location, when extracting data, the user must return to the 'Select CD/DVD and Data Drives' screen to specify the data file directory containing the data from which to extract.

Each of the CDs/DVDs is labeled with the file types, panels, and waves of the data it contains. The 1996 and 2001 weights files are present on each of the CDs containing data to which they refer. This is to allow *SIPP Utilities* to integrate the weights with the data in a single extraction, if the files are not copied to the hard disk. When copying to the hard disk, files that are already present, such as weights files already copied from a different CD, are ignored.

To copy data files to the hard disk after installation, open *SIPP Utilities*, click 'Preferences' in the top menu bar, and click 'CD/DVD and Data Drives' in the sub-menu. The 'Select CD/DVD and Data Drives' screen will show, allowing a location to be selected for the data file directory, and the CD/DVD drive letter to be specified.

Use the 'Browse' buttons on the 'Select CD/DVD and Data Drives' screen to make the necessary selections, and click 'Copy'. Screen messages will indicate progress and allow copying to be interrupted if desired. When all the data files on the disc have been copied, the user will be prompted to insert another disc, or to exit the copying process.

6. USING SIPP UTILITIES

6.1. Feature Summary

Following are some of the principal features of *SIPP Utilities*, with quick references to their usage. For more details, check the applicable sections of this manual below.

6.1.1. General documentation package

Click 'Documentation' in the top menu bar, and browse. Be sure to check Varlist core-long.xls, the topical module variable detail spreadsheets, and DataSource.xls, under the 'Spreadsheets' sub-menu item.

6.1.2. Consolidation of variable documentation on single pages

On the Variables screen, highlight any variable in the left list, and click 'Dictionary'.

6.1.3. Finding variables of interest

On the Variables screen, click 'Alphabetically', and use the 'Filter list by...' control. Browse the options under the 'By category', and 'Search...' controls.

6.1.4. Find variables if the Census Bureau names are known

On the Variables screen, click 'Show Census names' to show the Census names screen. Enter Census names in the top box and click 'Search', or highlight variables in the left list of the Variables screen. Or, use Varlist core-long.xls and the topical module variable detail spreadsheets, or just 'Search' the variable documentation files for them.

6.1.5. Filter extraction on values of variables

On the Variables screen, right-click on a variable in the list at right. A menu will show. Click ‘Add selection criteria for ...’. A dialog box will show. Enter a value or values, and click OK. The extraction will be limited to records with those values of that variable.

6.1.6. Relate source files to calendar months

On the Sources screen, browse the panel-wave chart and the slice chart.

6.1.7. Output options - file type

Select any of the seven option buttons at left of the Options screen.

6.1.8. Output options - combined files

There are over 150 separate SIPP source data files. To expedite analysis of related data from multiple source files, *SIPP Utilities* provides options to combine extractions from multiple files into a single output file. These options are described and selected in the ‘Combining options’ frame at right of the Options screen.

6.1.9. Output options - shape

SIPP Utilities allows the user to produce extractions in either wide or long format, from a core file in any panel. The wide format is a single record per person, matching the format of the Census data files for the 1984-1989 panels. The long format is one record per reference month per person, matching the Census format for the 1990 and later panels.

Further shaping options are available if files are combined.

These options are described and selected in the ‘Combining options’ frame at right of the Options screen.

6.1.10. Extraction preview

Since there are many extraction options, the Extract screen previews information about the output. Try different extraction options and preview their effect. Click ‘Extract’ to run the extraction.

6.1.11. Manage extraction request files

A request file contains the full definition of an extraction request, including the variables, the source files from which the extraction is to be made, and the formatting and other options. On the Request screen, note how working directories for request files and their resulting extractions can be specified. Note also how new request files can be made from existing ones if a series of similar extractions is required.

6.1.12. Periodicity

A variable’s periodicity is its interval between observations. *SIPP Utilities* uses periodicity to prevent or minimize repetition of redundant information in the output files. See Appendix P for a detailed discussion (click ‘Documentation’ in the top menu bar, and select ‘Appendices’ from the sub-menu). Use the Extract screen to preview the effect of including or excluding the variable AGE (which has a periodicity of Month) in an extraction of variables having longer periodicities.

6.1.13. 1996 and 2001 Core/Longitudinal files

For the 1996 and 2001 panels, the Census Bureau did not issue separate longitudinal files. Instead, they released ‘longitudinally consistent’ core files for each wave. *SIPP Utilities* calls these files simply ‘core files’ and enables the user to emulate the functionality of the earlier longitudinal files by combining them and producing a single extraction file, just like the earlier panels.

For instance, if `_ID` and `EDFUND` are extracted from all waves of the 1993 longitudinal and 1996 core files in the wide format, with ‘Combine Waves’ checked on the Options screen, the results will be identically formatted. (Use the ‘Limit number of records written’ checkbox on the Options screen to skim through the files quickly).

6.1.14. Core and Longitudinal files, output formatting equivalency in general

On the Sources screen, a subset of the waves in the panel may be selected for any longitudinal file, or all the waves in a panel may be selected for core files. On the Options screen, multiple waves may be combined into a single output file, or they may be kept separate. Using these options, extractions from any set of core files in a panel can be formatted longitudinally, or extractions from one longitudinal file can be formatted as separate waves.

6.1.15. Longitudinal weights files

For the 1996 and 2001 panels, the Census Bureau issued separate longitudinal weights files. For earlier panels, these weights were included in the longitudinal files. Transparently to the user, *SIPP Utilities* processes the 1996 and 2001 longitudinal weights so that they appear as they did in the earlier panels. For example, extract variables `_ID` and `FNLWGT96` from any or all of the 1996 core files. `FNLWGT96` will automatically be extracted from the separate weights file. For comparison, extract `_ID` and `FNLWGT93` from the 1993 longitudinal file. The results will be equivalent.

6.1.16. Topical modules

On the Sources screen, select ‘Topical’ under ‘Select file type(s)’, click ‘Select by topical module subject’, and select one of the topics. The panel-wave chart and the source list will show where that topic appears. On the Variables screen, if there is text below the ‘Filter list by...’ button, click the button and uncheck the two boxes. Click ‘By category’. Click ‘Change category’ and ‘Topical’ to show the topical modules if necessary, and then click the module that was selected on the Sources screen. The categories (sub-topics) for that module will display. Select one or more (or all) of the categories and click OK.

Then proceed with variable selection and extraction as for core and longitudinal variables.

All the formatting and combining options are also available with topical module files. Variables from different topical modules, core and longitudinal files, and multiple waves and panels may be included in the same extraction request.

6.1.17. Common Core/Topical variables

Recent topical module files contain a set of demographic variables common to all topical modules. *SIPP Utilities* distinguishes them from their core file equivalents by suffixing ‘_T’ to the variable name. *SIPP Utilities* also automatically extracts them from the core files if they are not present in the topical files. See Appendix M and spreadsheet TM Core-Topical Common.xls for details.

6.1.18. Results screen

Most of it is self-explanatory. Run any extraction and examine the report. Click ‘List’ to get a visual confirmation that the data are as expected, and to link to the variable documentation. The ‘Execute code’ (or ‘Load to Stata’, etc.) button is a key feature.

Depending on the output option selected, and assuming the applicable program is installed and properly associated with the file extension, it loads the extracted data to Stata or a spreadsheet, or loads the custom program code to the SAS or SPSS code editor.

6.1.19. Last word on combining inputs and merging outputs

As an extreme example, *SIPP Utilities* can extract data from all 24 core and topical files, and the separate weights file, in the 1996 panel, and output the result as a single file with a single record per person. To verify: start a new request file, and on the Sources screen select core and topical file types and all the 1996 waves; on the Variables screen add SEX and SEX_T; and on the Options screen check Combine File types and Waves, and select Wide (person records). To save time, limit number of records written to 1000.

On the Extract screen, verify the selections and see what output will result. Click Extract. When the Results screen shows, verify.

6.2. Sample Extraction

Among the documents distributed with the CDs is a set of pages titled ‘Sample Extraction’. They guide the user through an example showing the steps required to find variables of interest and extract their values.

The Sample Extraction document may also be accessed by selecting it from the Documentation menu item in the top menu bar of the *SIPP Utilities* screen.

For further information on *SIPP Utilities* functions, check the applicable sections of this manual below.

6.3. Detailed usage instructions

After installation is complete, when *SIPP Utilities* opens, it appears as in Figure 1. There are five overlapping windows, any of which may be brought to the top by clicking its button in the toolbar near the top, or on any part of it that is visible. Above the toolbar is the menu bar, providing access to general documentation and other items.

The five numbered windows (screens) are described in turn below.

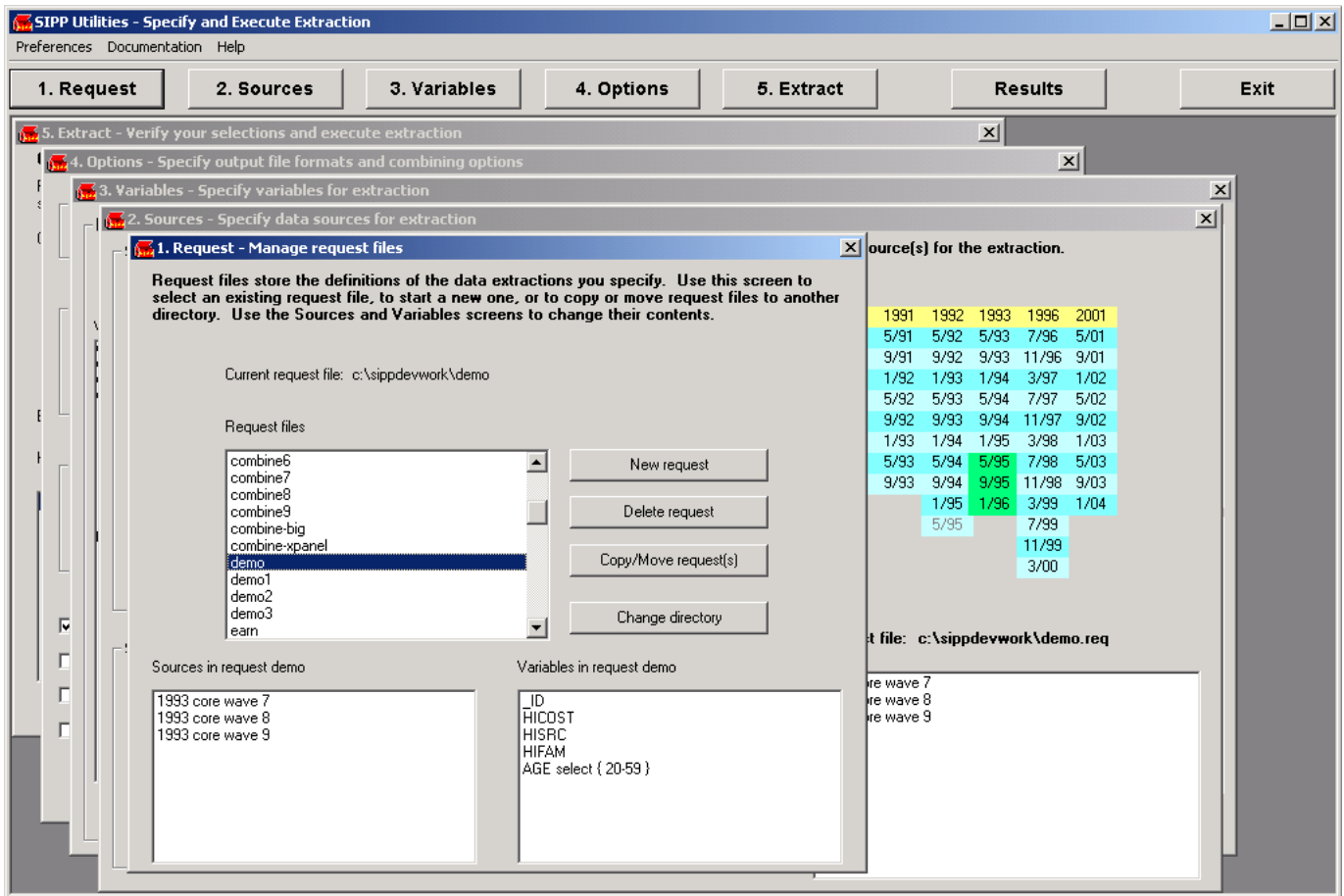


Figure 1. *SIPP Utilities*, showing the five overlapping screens.

6.3.1. Request screen

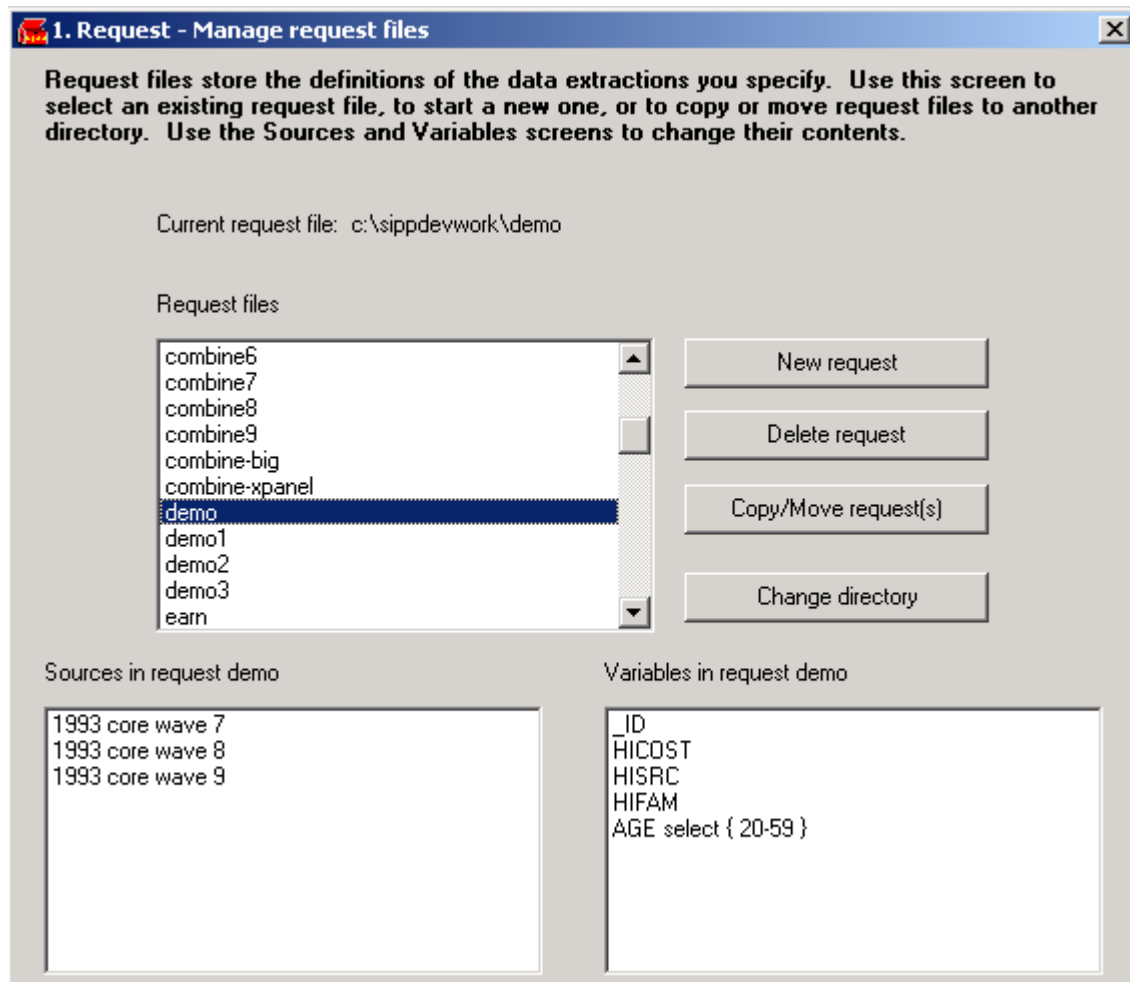


Figure 2. Request screen

The Request screen allows the user to create files in which to store the details of extraction requests. The two lists at the bottom of the Request screen show the sources and variables currently specified for the selected request file. The contents of those two lists are specified on the next two screens. They cannot be changed from this screen.

The center list contains all the request files in the current working directory. The buttons at the right allow the user to start a new request, to delete an existing request, to copy or move an existing request, or to change to a different working directory.

On first installation, messages show, asking the user to select a working directory and to start a new request file.

Once one or more request files have been created, they may be easily copied or combined using the dialog shown in Figure 3, which appears when the 'New Request' button is clicked.

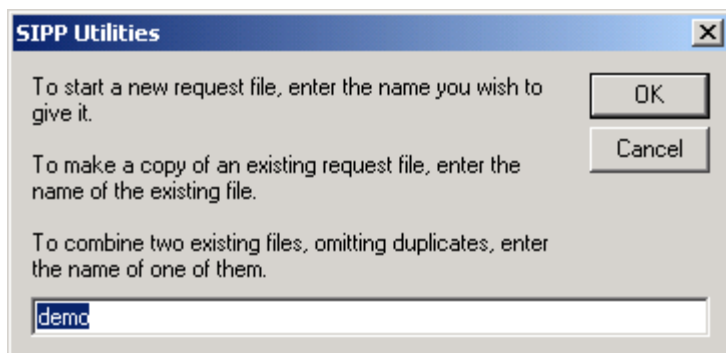


Figure 3. 'New Request' dialog

When the extraction is run, the results are saved in a sub-directory with the same name as the request file. The full paths to the result files are listed in the Extraction Report, shown in Figure 16 below. The contents of the lower two lists on the Request screen are automatically updated to show the sources and variables currently listed on the Sources screen and the Variables screen when the extraction is run.

Typically, the user would not return to the Request screen after changing the sources or the variables and before running the extraction, but if that does happen, the dialog shown in Figure 4 will show, allowing the user to continue with their changes or revert to the original selections.

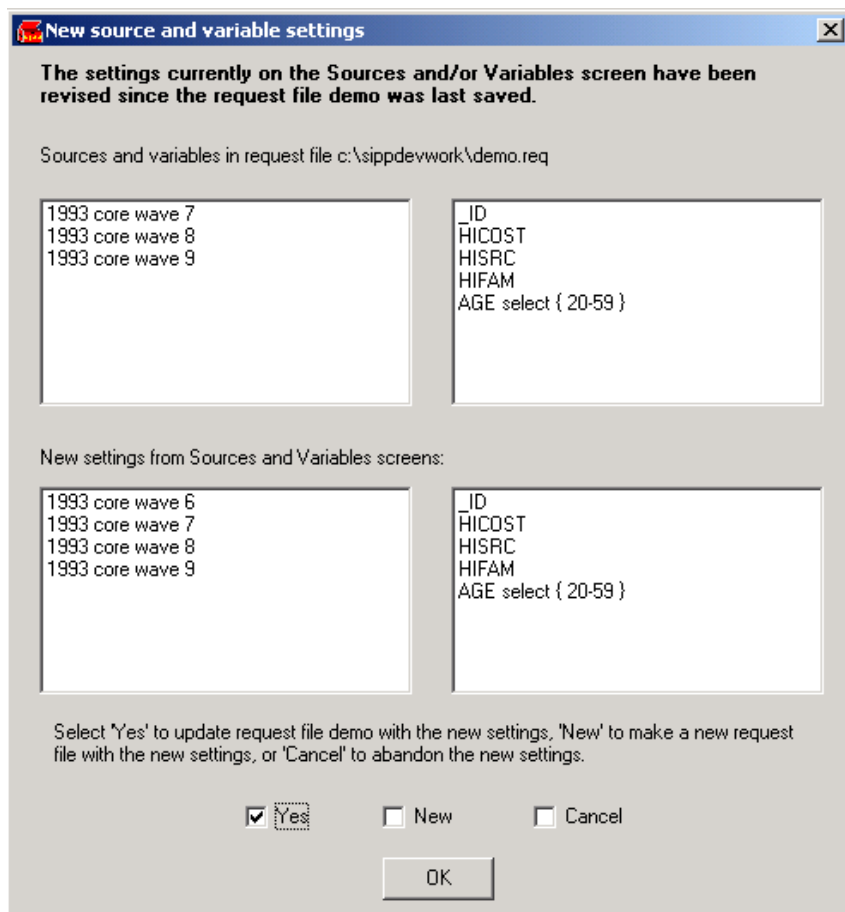


Figure 4. Dialog allowing request file changes to be saved before running an extraction

6.3.2. Sources screen

2. Sources - Specify data sources for extraction

Select date display

Show...

☐ 1st reference month

☐ 2nd reference month

☐ 3rd reference month

☐ 4th reference month

☒ Interview month

For...

☐ 1st rotation group

☐ 2nd rotation group

☐ 3rd rotation group

☒ 4th rotation group

More information

Panel-wave chart. Click rows, columns, or cells to specify data source(s) for the extraction.

Panels:	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1996	2001
Wave 1	1/84	5/85	5/86	5/87	5/88	5/89	5/90	5/91	5/92	5/93	7/96	5/01
Wave 2	*	*	9/86	9/87	9/88	9/89	9/90	9/91	9/92	9/93	11/96	9/01
Wave 3	5/84	9/85	*	1/88	1/89	1/90	1/91	1/92	1/93	1/94	3/97	1/02
Wave 4	9/84	1/86	1/87	5/88	5/89		5/91	5/92	5/93	5/94	7/97	5/02
Wave 5	1/85	5/86	5/87	9/88	9/89		9/91	9/92	9/93	9/94	11/97	9/02
Wave 6	5/85	9/86	9/87	1/89	1/90		1/92	1/93	1/94	1/95	3/98	1/03
Wave 7	9/85	1/87	1/88	5/89			5/92	5/93	5/94	5/95	7/98	5/03
Wave 8	1/86	5/87					9/92	9/93	9/94	9/95	11/98	9/03
Wave 9	5/86								1/95	1/96	3/99	1/04
Wave 10									5/95		7/99	
Wave 11											11/99	
Wave 12											3/00	

* Short wave, skipped by this rotation group.

Select panel(s) and wave(s)

Select by topical module subject

☐ Select cross-section:

Start Year: 1992 Month: Jan

End Year: 1992 Month: Dec

More information Show slice chart

Select file type(s)

Core
Longitudinal
Topical

Request file: c:\sippdevwork\demo.req

1993 core wave 7
1993 core wave 8
1993 core wave 9

Figure 5. Sources screen

The Sources screen allows the user to select the files from which data extractions are to be made. The selected files are listed in the box at lower right. The file types (core, longitudinal, topical) are selected in the list box to its left. The upper right part of this screen shows the Panel-Wave chart, where one or more specific files may be selected. Selected files are indicated by a green background in the chart, as well as being listed in the box below.

Multiple file types, panels, and waves may be selected for a single extraction. Output files may be combined, or kept separate, using the choices provided on the Options screen.

The longitudinal weights files for the 1996 and 2001 panels are not shown as separate sources. Instead, they are accessed automatically when longitudinal weights variables are included in an extraction request from the other 1996 or 2001 sources.

The Panel-Wave chart shows the calendar months represented in each panel and wave, for each reference month and rotation group, specified in the 'Select date display' frame at upper left. The same information may be displayed in a different format by clicking the 'Show slice chart' button.

Instead of clicking in the chart, the controls in the 'Select panel(s) and wave(s)' frame, at lower left, allow panels and waves to be selected either by topical module subject, or by calendar period.

6.3.3. Variables screen

6.3.3.1. Finding variables of interest

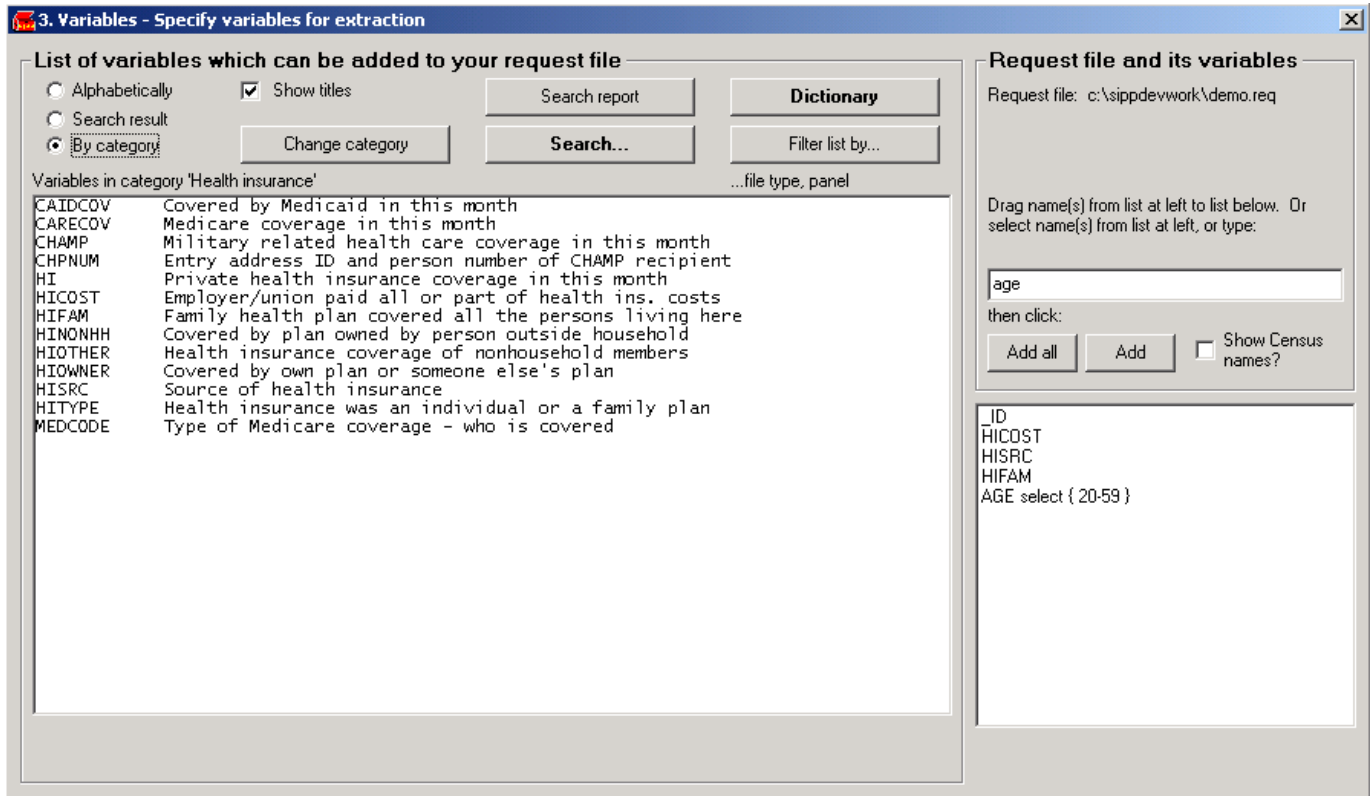


Figure 6. Variables screen

The large box at the left initially contains all the SIPP variables. The box at the right shows the variables currently specified for extraction in the request file selected on the Request screen.

Variables may be added to the request file in several ways. They may be dragged from the left box, or selected in the left box and added with the 'Add' button, either individually or in a group. Their names may be typed into the box above the list, and added with the 'Add' button.

The contents of the left list scrolls horizontally to display more variables. Its contents may be filtered to a more convenient size is several ways. The 'Filter list by...' button displays the dialog shown in Figure 7, which allows the user to keep only the variables in the file type(s) and/or panel(s) of interest. When this filtering is in effect, its definition is shown in a text entry below the 'Filter list by...' button, as in Figure 6.

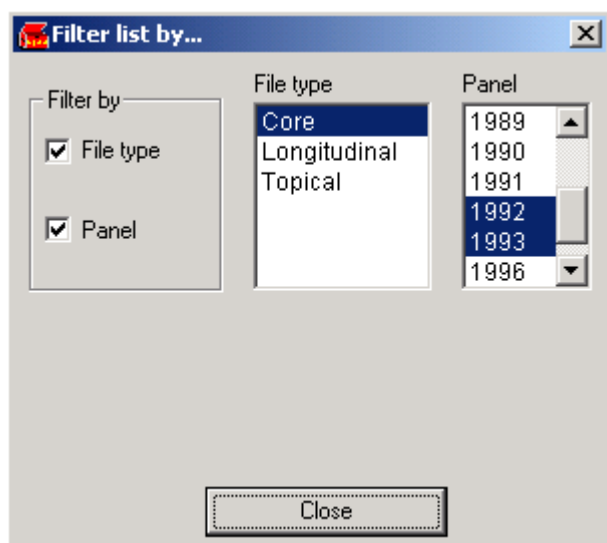


Figure 7. Filter list dialog

The three option buttons at upper left further define the content of the left list. The 'By category' button filters the list by subject, as selected in the dialogs shown in Figures 8a or 8b, one of which displays when the 'Change category' button is clicked. The two versions of this dialog may be toggled by clicking the applicable button at the top.

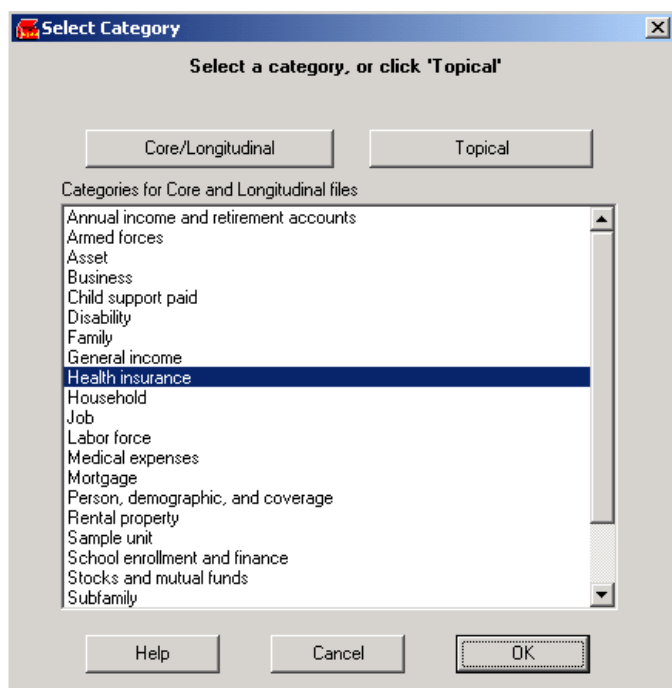


Figure 8a. Select core/longitudinal category

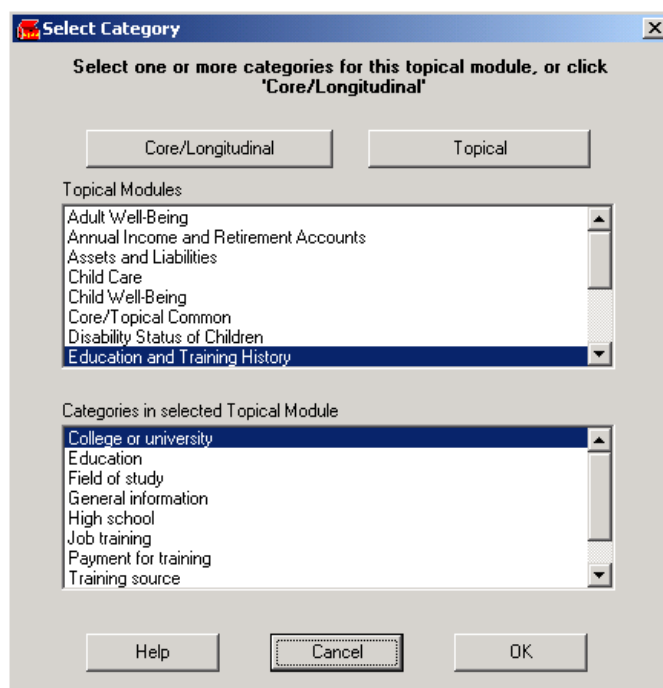


Figure 8b. Select topical module category

The 'Search' button allows the variable documentation files to be searched for specific text in two ways, using the dialogs shown in Figures 9a and 9b. The 'Search results' option button displays the results of the most recent search.

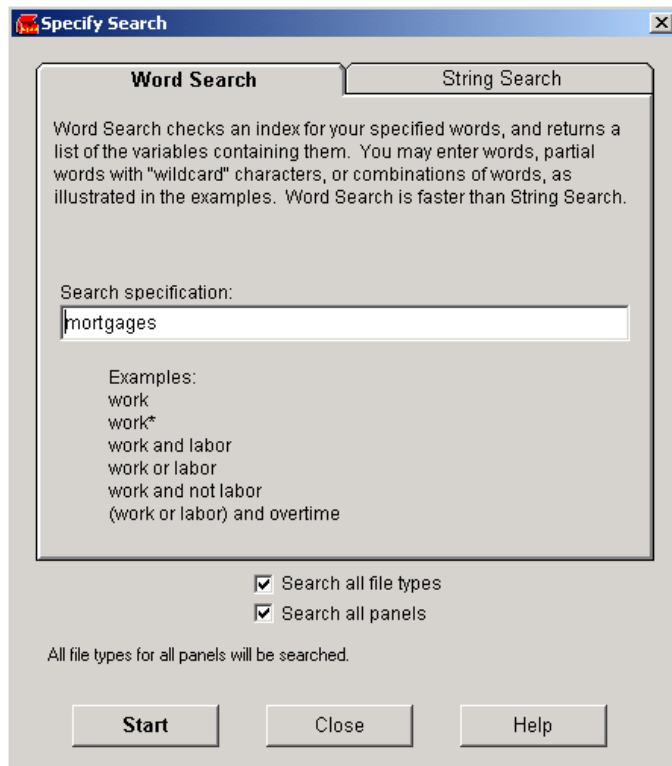


Figure 9a. Word search dialog

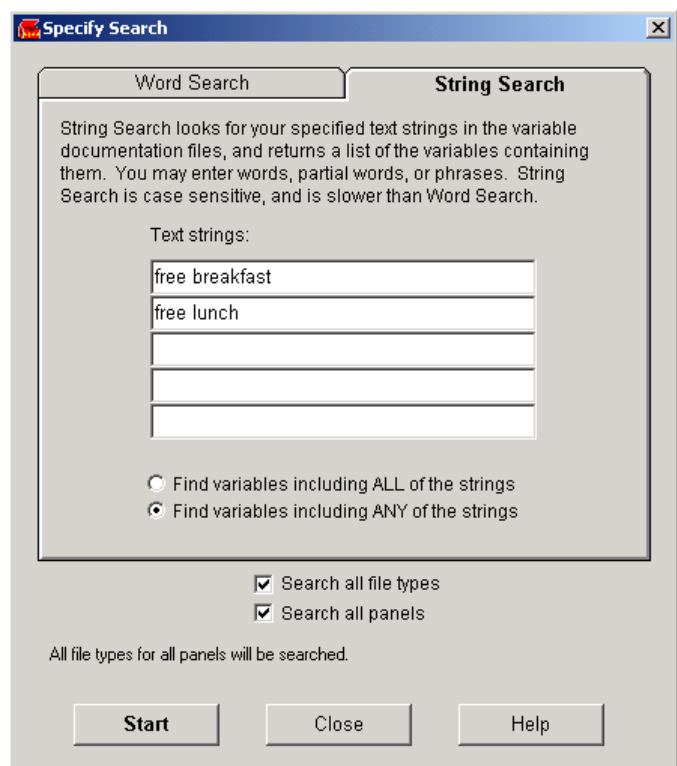


Figure 9b. String search dialog

The 'Show titles' checkbox toggles display of the titles for each of the variables in the left list.

6.3.3.2. Variable-specific extraction options

When the right mouse button is clicked over a variable in the right list, a menu to apply value filtering and other variable-specific extraction options, as in Figure 10, is displayed.

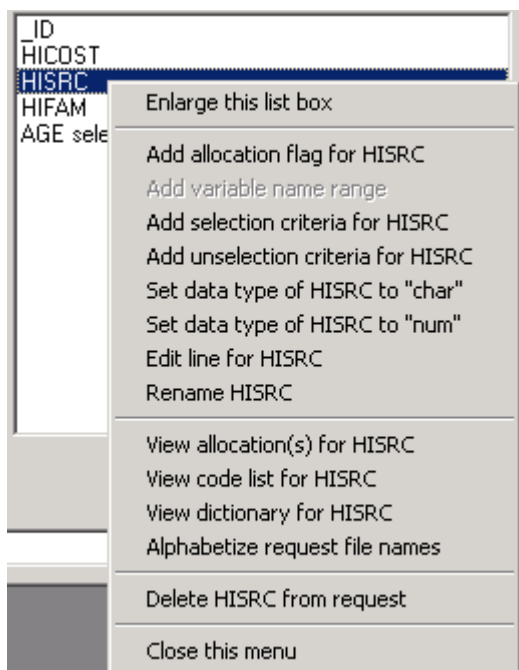


Figure 10. Right-click menu

Some of the right-click menu items display additional dialog boxes as illustrated in Figures 10a and 10b.

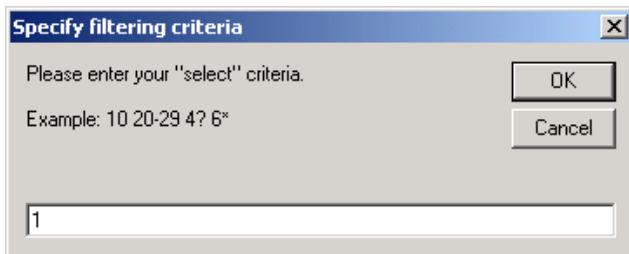
A dialog box titled "Specify filtering criteria" with a close button (X) in the top right corner. It contains the text "Please enter your 'select' criteria." followed by "OK" and "Cancel" buttons. Below this is an example: "Example: 10 20-29 4? 6*". At the bottom is a text input field containing the value "1".

Figure 10a. Filter on value(s) of variable

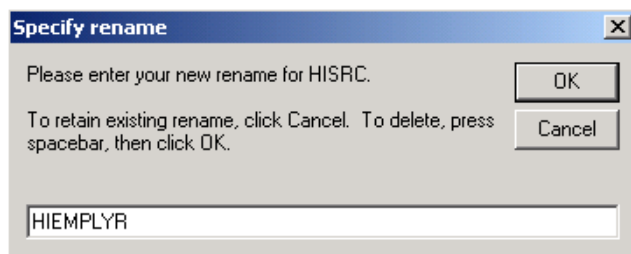
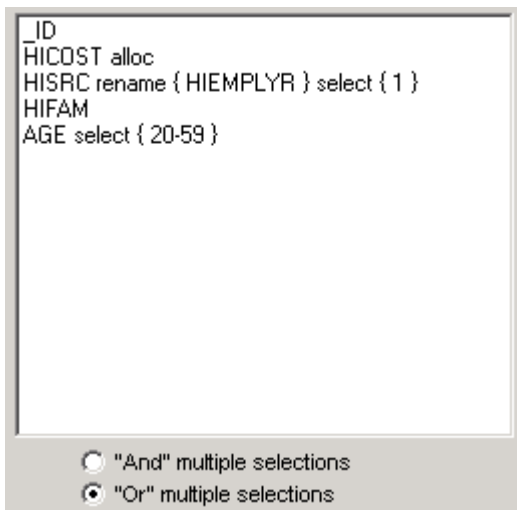
A dialog box titled "Specify rename" with a close button (X) in the top right corner. It contains the text "Please enter your new rename for HISRC." followed by "OK" and "Cancel" buttons. Below this is the instruction: "To retain existing rename, click Cancel. To delete, press spacebar, then click OK." At the bottom is a text input field containing the value "HIEMPLYR".

Figure 10b. Rename variable

The menu item 'Add allocation flag for...' adds the applicable allocation flag (or flags) for the variable to the extraction. Allocation flags cannot be added directly to the request file. Allocation flags cannot be extracted for variables to which the rename option is applied.

The right-click menu items selections are saved in the request file as arguments to the variables to which they apply, as shown in Figure 11. Figure 11 also shows that if there is more than one variable with filter criteria, option buttons are provided to make the filtering inclusive or exclusive.

A screenshot of a request file showing the following text:

```
ID
HICOST alloc
HISRC rename { HIEMPLYR } select { 1 }
HIFAM
AGE select { 20-59 }
```

At the bottom of the window are two radio buttons:
☐ "And" multiple selections
☒ "Or" multiple selections

Figure 11. Request file, showing right-click choices

6.3.3.3. Variable-specific documentation

Each variable has a documentation file showing detailed information about the variable in all the sources in which it exists (Figure 12). The documentation file may be displayed by selecting the variable in the left list and clicking the 'Dictionary' button, or by double-clicking the variable name in either list.

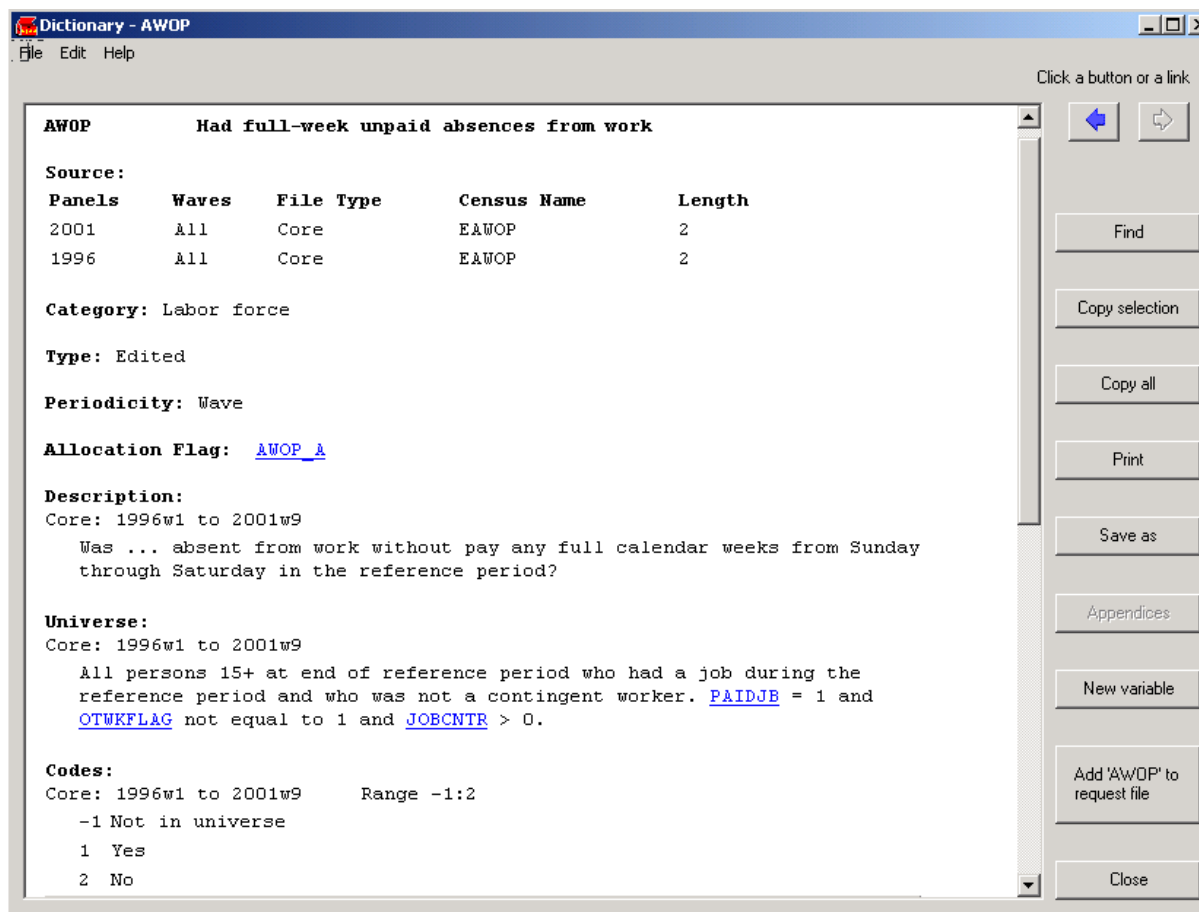


Figure 12. Variable-specific documentation (Dictionary) screen

Hyperlinks in the variable documentation enable the user to immediately show the documentation for related variables and appendices. The left and right arrows at top right allow the user to browse all the variables shown since the window was opened. The dictionary screen can be resized if required, by dragging its borders. Buttons on this screen enable the user to find text, copy, print, and save the contents of the display. The 'New variable' button displays an alphabetic variable list, allowing the documentation of other variables to be displayed without returning to the Variables screen. The 'Add ... to request file' button adds the displayed variable to the request file without returning to the Variables screen.

6.3.3.4. Census name matching

Consistent variable naming across file types, panels, and waves is a valuable feature of *SIPP Utilities*, facilitating comparison of like data from multiple sources. However, users may initially be more familiar with the Census Bureau names. *SIPP Utilities* therefore includes tools for matching Census names with *SIPP Utilities* names, and, if desired, renaming variables with their Census names.

The most direct way is to use the table of Census names at the beginning of the dictionary file for each variable (Figure 12). If a Census name is entered in the 'Word Search' dialog (Figure 9a), all variables with that Census name will quickly be found.

Another way is to search the spreadsheets accessible from the 'Documentation' menu item for Census names.

A more interactive way is to highlight a variable in the left list on the Variables screen, and check the 'Show Census names' box. The table shown in Figure 13 will display, showing all the Census names used for that variable. The user may then simply click on other variables in the left list to display their Census names.

Census names by panel and file type

Select a variable on the Variables screen to see Census names for all panels and file types.
 Or, type Census name (not allocation flag name) for which to search, then click 'Search' or press Enter key.

SIPP Utilities name: **AFNOW** ☐ Current Armed Forces status

	Core	Longitudinal	Topical	Weight
2001	EAFNOW <input checked="" type="radio"/>			
1996	EAFNOW <input type="radio"/>			
1993	INAF <input type="radio"/>	IN_AF <input type="radio"/>		
1992	INAF <input type="radio"/>	IN_AF <input type="radio"/>		
1991	INAF <input type="radio"/>	IN_AF <input type="radio"/>		
1990	INAF <input type="radio"/>	IN_AF <input type="radio"/>		
1989	IN_AF <input type="radio"/>			
1988	IN_AF <input type="radio"/>	IN_AF <input type="radio"/>		
1987	IN_AF <input type="radio"/>	IN_AF <input type="radio"/>		
1986	IN_AF <input type="radio"/>	IN_AF <input type="radio"/>		
1985	IN_AF <input type="radio"/>	IN_AF <input type="radio"/>		
1984	IN_AF <input type="radio"/>	IN_AF <input type="radio"/>		

Mark the option button to the right of the Census name to use in the request file. Click 'Add' on the Variables screen to add the SIPP name, renamed as the Census name, to the request file. If the Census name is blank, the SIPP Utilities name will be used.

Figure 13. Census name matching table

The 'Search' button on the table in Figure 13 provides matching in the opposite direction, i.e. if a Census name is entered in the adjacent box, on clicking 'Search', the **SIPP Utilities** name is displayed, along with all the other Census names used for that variable.

More interactively still, if a Census name, e.g. EAFNOW, is entered in the box above the right list on the Variables screen, on clicking 'Add', the user is prompted to open the Census name matching table, which then displays the corresponding **SIPP Utilities** name, and all the other Census names used for that variable.

The option buttons in the Census name matching table enable the user to rename the variable to the appropriate Census name. Thus, if the option button associated with the 2001 Core entry is selected, as in Figure 13, on clicking the 'Add' button on the Variables screen, the entry 'AFNOW rename { EAFNOW }' is added to the request file.

6.3.4. Options screen

4. Options - Specify output file formats and combining options

Direct dataset

☐ Stata dataset

Create dataset using program code

☒ Stata

☐ SAS

☐ SPSS

Table

☐ Space delimited ASCII table

☐ Comma delimited ASCII table

☐ Right justified in fixed width field

☒ Include variable labels?

☐ Preview report only?

☐ Include input file attributes in report?

☒ Limit number of records written?

Number of IDs to output (edit as required): 1000

Combining options

'Combining' means including multiple instances of your selected variables in the same output file. (Multiple instances occur when the same variable is measured more than once, e.g. once per reference month, or in both core and topical files).

Combining can be done in two ways. You may place your multiple instances in separate records, which will be stacked (or appended) one after another to create a 'Long' file. Or you may merge them in the same record, creating a shorter file of 'Wide' records.

Combining is optional. If you do not check any of these boxes, you will get one output file for each selected source file.

	Combine	Configure combination	
		Long (stacked)	Wide (merged)
File types	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Always wide
Waves	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Same as Reference months below	
Reference months	Always combined	<input type="radio"/> (person-month records)	<input checked="" type="radio"/> (person records)

More information

Figure 14. Options screen

The seven option buttons in the frames at upper left of this screen allow the user to select types of output files to be produced, to suit the user's preference for further processing of the extracted data. The top button produces a Stata dataset directly, the next three produce data as ascii files with code segments for loading the data file into Stata, SAS, or SPSS, and the last three produce differently formatted ascii tables, including a comma-separated value format for loading directly to a spreadsheet.

The first checkbox at lower left allow variable labels or titles to be included in the output files (its caption changes depending on the output file type selection). The second checkbox skips the extraction and just produces the output report. The third checkbox adds a section to the extraction report providing additional information about each variable, including any renaming and filtering specified. The fourth checkbox allows a short preliminary extraction to take place so the user can verify the output is as expected. The number of records output will not always equal the number of IDs specified in the adjacent box, as variations may occur depending on filtering and combining options.

The options shown at the right of this screen allow the user to combine and merge extractions, to facilitate longitudinal analysis.

New users are recommended to keep both checkboxes under 'Combine' unchecked. They will then get one output file per source file, thereby avoiding the variable name suffixes and auxiliary variables necessary to distinguish sources when combining extractions from multiple sources into a single output file.

The two option buttons at lower right format core file extractions from any panel as either person-month (long, like the 1990-2001 Census files) or person (wide, like the 1984-1989 Census files). If variables with Month periodicity, such as AGE, are included in the extraction, reference months are distinguished in long format by the auxiliary variable _REFMO, and in wide format by suffixes _M1, etc., e.g. AGE_M1 through AGE_M4.

If the checkbox to combine waves is checked, the two option buttons have a similar effect. For example, if on the sources screen all waves of the 1993 panel are highlighted, in the long format there would be up to 36 records per person, with auxiliary variables `_WAVE` distinguishing waves, and `_REFMO` distinguishing months, and in the wide format `AGE` would appear 36 times, as `AGE_W1M1` through `AGE_W9M4`.

If the checkbox to combine file types is checked, only the wide output option is available, as the longitudinal and topical file types do not distinguish reference months. Following the principle used to distinguish months and waves, the source of variables that exist in multiple file types is identified by another suffix, `_C`, `_L`, or `_T`, for core, longitudinal, or topical.

Further information on periodicity, and its influence on the formatting of data extractions, is provided in Appendix P.

6.3.5. Extract screen

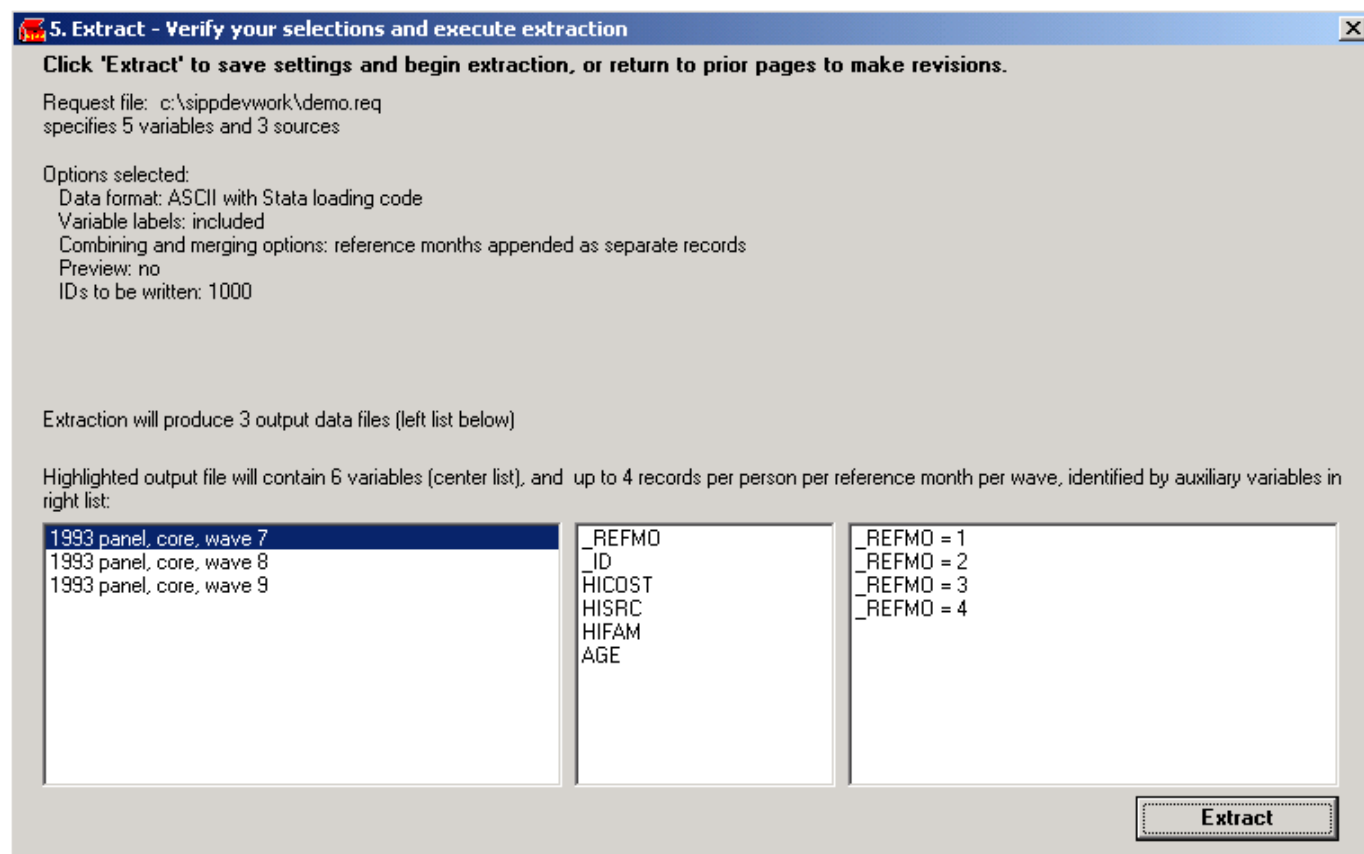


Figure 15. Extract screen

The purpose of this screen is simply to collect and display to the user all the selections made on the other four screens, and to summarize the expected results.

The selections are listed in the upper part of the screen.

The three list boxes show (left) the source(s) for each output file, (center) the variables that will be included in the output file selected in the left list, and (right) the values of any auxiliary variables that *SIPP Utilities* needs to produce.

Auxiliary variables are required when the output file, as specified on the Options screen, is in the person-month (long) format. In such cases, as shown in Figure 15, there are multiple records in the output file for each person, and they must be distinguished by one or more auxiliary variables, in this case `_REFMO`.

When the output file is specified to be in the wide format, the variables that change by reference month are suffixed in the output file, e.g. as `AGE_M1` through `AGE_M4`, and they are shown as such in the center list.

The user may make adjustments to the choices on the other four screens, and immediately check the effects on this screen. When ready, the 'Extract' button may be clicked to begin the extraction.

During the extraction, a progress box will be displayed. The extraction may be aborted if desired, by clicking the 'Esc' key on the keyboard. On completion, the Results screen is displayed, initially showing the Extraction Report (Figure 16).

6.3.6. Results screen

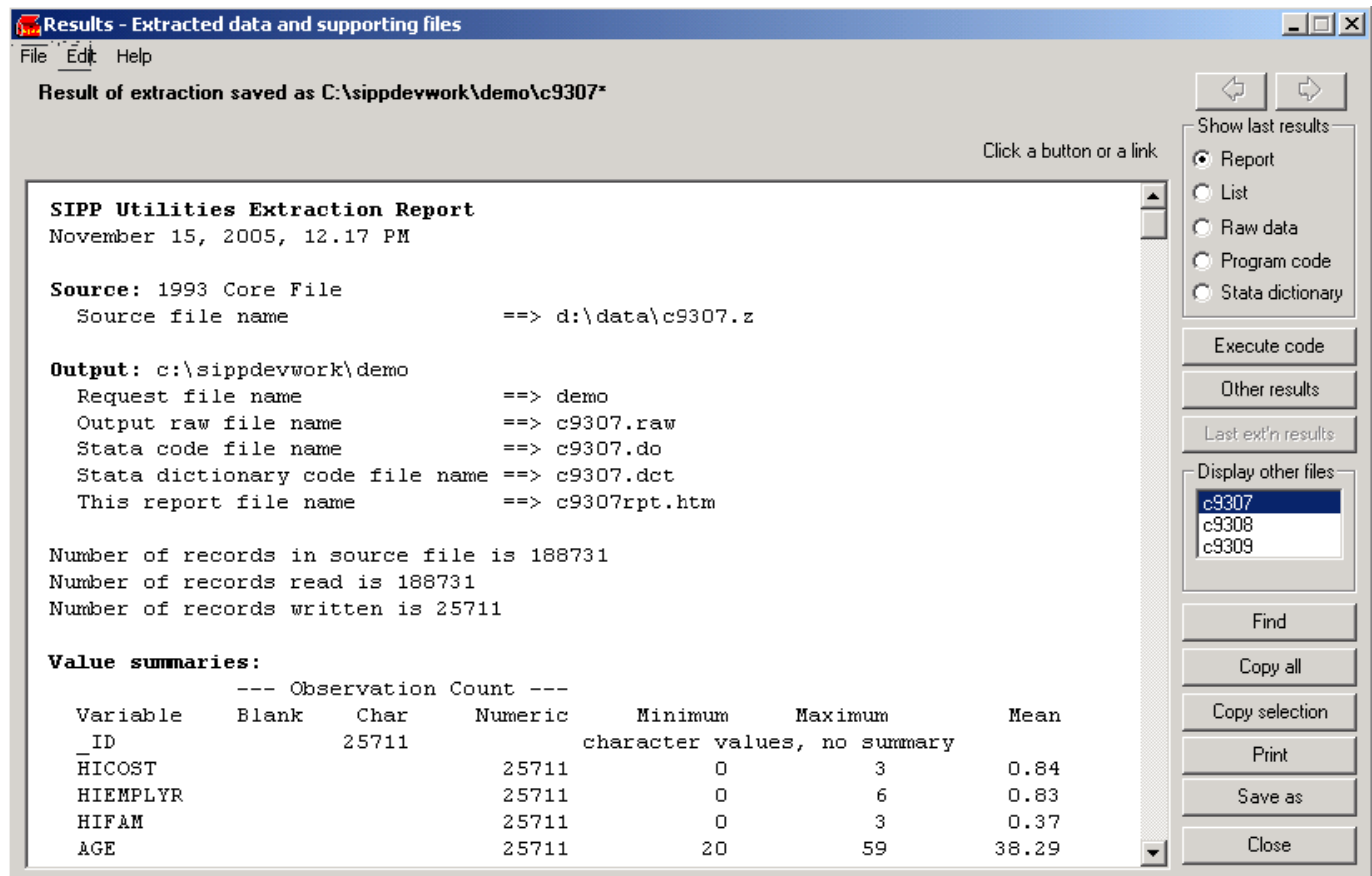


Figure 16. Results screen, showing beginning of Extraction Report

The Extraction Report documents the extraction. Following the details shown in Figure 16 is a list of the extraction options selected, and the documentation for each of the extracted variables.

Buttons at lower right of the Results screen allow the screen contents to be searched, copied, printed, or saved in a different location.

The 'Display other files' box at center right is shown if multiple sources are selected for extraction, but not combined. It allows the results from any of the extractions to be shown.

The option buttons at top right enable other results of the current extraction to be displayed. The 'List' option displays the extraction as a table, for visual verification that the extraction produced the intended results (Figure 17).

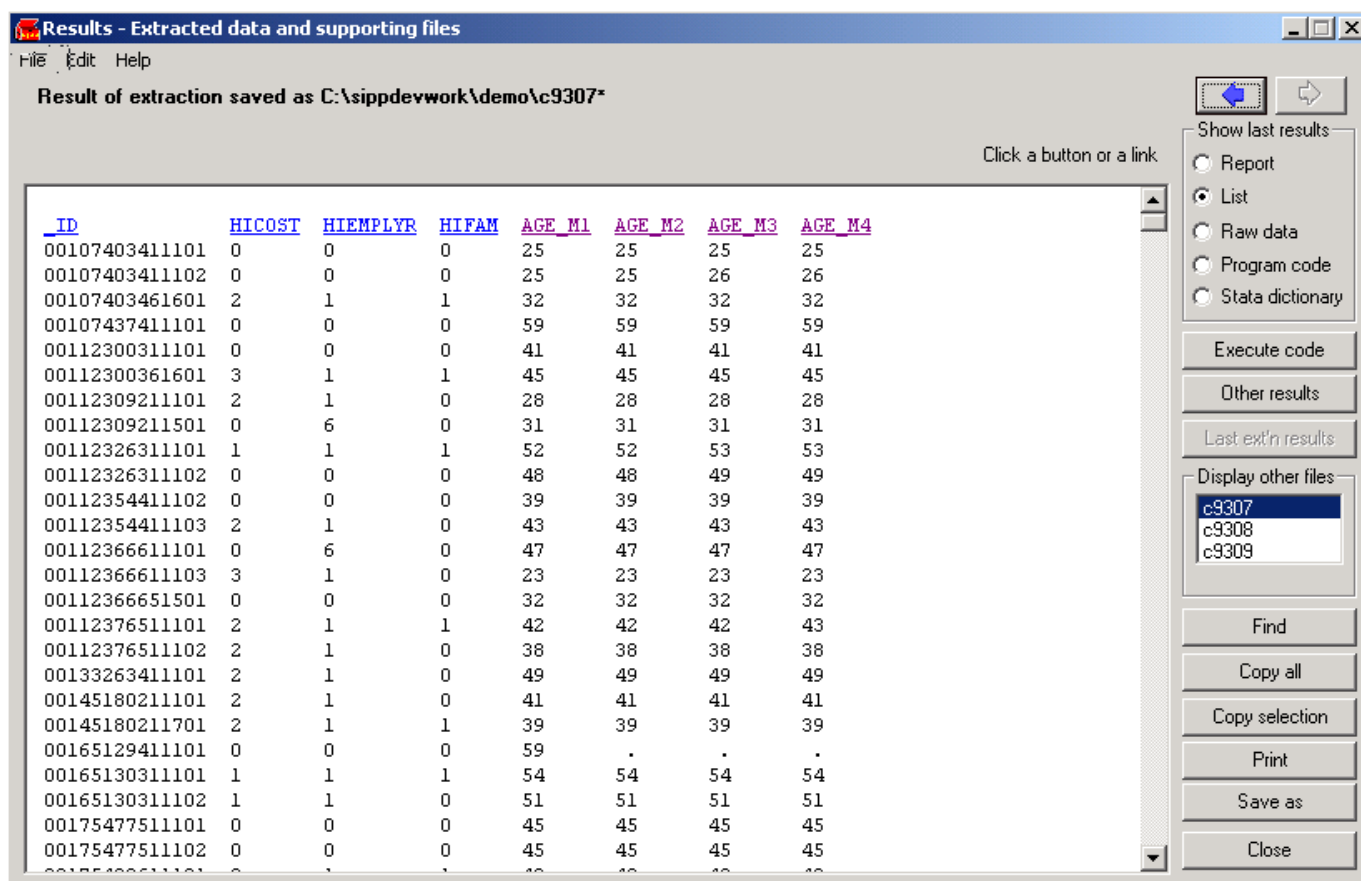


Figure 17. Results screen, showing extracted data list

The variable names at the top of the table may be clicked to display the variable's documentation. The arrows at top right of the Results screen enable the user to move backwards and forwards through the screen contents previously displayed.

The remaining three option buttons at top right of the Results screen allow the contents of the files produced by the extraction to be displayed directly.

Below the option buttons is the 'Execute code' button. Depending on the type of output file selected on the Options screen, this button may be differently named, and may function slightly differently. In each case it will take the appropriate action to initiate further examination of the extracted data.

For instance, if the selected output file format was 'Comma delimited ASCII table', the button will start Excel and load the extraction into it. In the case shown in Figures 16 and 17, the extraction produced an ascii data file and matching Stata .do and .dct files to load the data file. The 'Execute code' button starts Stata and runs the .do file to load the extracted raw data.

Correct functioning of this button requires the proper application to be present on the user's computer and correctly associated with the file name extension of the applicable file (as listed at the top of the Extraction Report, figure 16).

6.3.7. Menu items

These items are in the menu bar at the top of the *SIPP Utilities* window, Figure 1.

6.3.7.1. Preferences

The 'CD/DVD and Data Drives' sub-menu item displays the screen shown during installation, where the user sets the CD/DVD drive letter and the location of the data files, and optionally copies data files from the disc. It allows the user to change these

settings if desired. The ‘Message duration’ sub-menu item allows the user to adjust the time certain messages display, or to suppress them altogether. Typically, these messages appear between panels or waves of extractions from multiple sources. For instance, one such message warns the user if previously-extracted files are about to be overwritten.

6.3.7.2. Documentation

This menu item leads to a number of sub-menu items giving access to all the ***SIPP Utilities*** general documentation. Many important documents are included here. Users are advised to browse these items extensively.

6.3.7.3. Help

Instructions for most ***SIPP Utilities*** operations are shown directly on the applicable screens. Where further information is likely to be needed, ‘Help’ or ‘More information’ buttons are provided on the screens.

In case further help is needed, the user may consult the pages accessible under this menu item.

7. CONTACT US

We are anxious to hear your suggestions that will improve the convenience of ***SIPP Utilities***. If you wish to suggest changes or make comments, please feel to call us at Unicon (310 393-4636; ask for Eanswythe Grabowski, Bryan Rickard or Barbara Moore), or send us e-mail at support@unicon.com. Check our website (<http://www.unicon.com>) periodically for announcements and updates.